11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6

317 with small stones) the process was a slow one: to collect about
323 one *gantang* (gallon) of useable clay took 45 minutes. This amount, said Demai, would be enough for about five or six pots.

286 When we arrived back at the long-house Runin was busily occupied putting cotton on to a tying-frame (*tangga ajan*)—one of the most complicated processes in the technique of *ikat* weaving.
323 Unable to attend to the task herself she instructed Demai to go on with the next stage in the handling of the clay: the sunning
[285] of it. Demai took a small mat (of the kind known as *tikai sengang*) and laid it out on that section of the *tanju*, or open platform of the long-house that belonged to Runin's apartment. Then, from the pile of clay she had collected in her basket she broke off small lumps—each about the size of a hen's egg—and laid them in rows on the mat. (Plate 2). It was by now mid-day. For the rest of that day and during the following morning the pieces of clay were left out in the full heat of the sun. The purpose of this, said Runin, was to dry the clay thoroughly, ready for the next process of pounding and sieving.

323 The clay laid out to sun, we returned with Demai to Runin's
784 apartment. Soon after we had sat down Mut, aged 18, the son
811 of Runin's deceased sister Giram and a member of Runin's *bilek* family, strode in. He had in his hands several cobs of corn
[252] (*Zea mays*) which, so it appeared, he was intending to roast in the embers of the fire that was burning on the family hearth. Drying on a rack above this hearth were the two pots that Runin had made the previous day. As soon as she realized what he was about Runin called to him in an agitated voice to go to some other apartment to roast his corn, giving as her reason: *"Takut priok aku blah"* ("For fear that my earthenware pots should burst.") Mut gave a grin of understanding and at once left—carrying his corn. Here we have another prohibition (*pemali lingkau*) closely resembling that already mentioned. When corn is roasted those seeds which are exposed to the full heat of the fire often explode with distinctly audible 'pops.' It is the belief of the Iban that corn roasted in this way in close proximity to unfired clay pots may result in those pots exploding when in due course they come to be
[373] fired. Similarly, there is a prohibition (*pemali getah*) against the use of damar gum in the vicinity of partially completed pots for the same reason that damar—an ancient form of illumination among the Iban—splutters and explodes as it burns.